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Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

April/May 1997

# NEWS

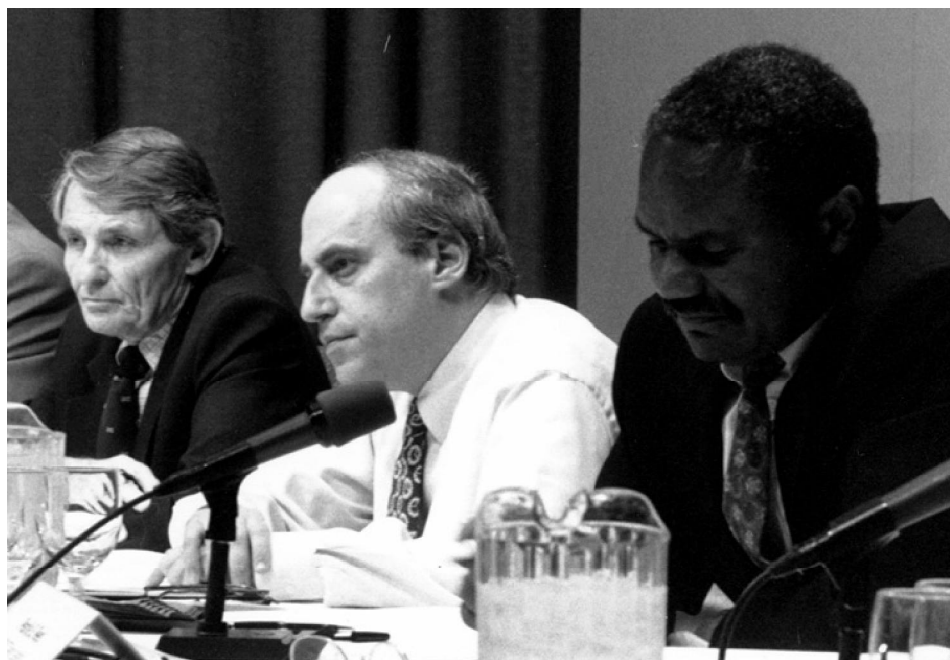
## New Civil Rights Plan Announced

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced a series of steps in the new Civil Rights Plan to ensure fair and equitable treatment of both employees and customers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Sub-Cabinet on February 28. The Secretary set a deadline of 6 months for implementation of the Plan's 92 recommendations.

Glickman said that the most dramatic changes will come from efforts to reign in authority to ensure accountability at all levels in the Department. The Department plans to seek legislative authority to convert all of the Farm Service Agency's non-federal county positions to federal employee status. "That will cover everyone who receives their salary from the Federal Government," Glickman said. "This action will put us in a better position to bring uniform accountability to federal civil rights laws, while preserving what's good about our county field structure--a strong local USDA presence."

Other actions announced include:

- Plans to eliminate the backlog in both program and Equal Employment Opportunity complaints within 120 days;
- Vesting the office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration with the authority to review the civil rights records of Agency heads and subcabinet officials;



Richard Rominger, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; Dan Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture; and Pearlie Reed, Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration, listened to employees and customers explaining civil rights abuses during the Civil Rights Listening Session in Washington, D.C.

- Creating a civil rights arm of the Office of the General Counsel;
- Establishing a national commission on small farms to develop an aggressive strategy for keeping this important American tradition alive and well;
- Creating a department-wide workforce planning and recruitment effort; and,
- Requiring annual civil rights training for employees;
- Continuing the civil rights hotline -- 1-800-358-4309 -- for employees

and customers who believe their cases have not been adequately addressed.

The Secretary pledged himself to ensuring the civil rights of USDA's customers and employees, and he holds his subcabinet, agency heads, and managers all responsible for civil rights at the Department. "At USDA there will be a *zero tolerance policy* for retaliation of any kind against employees or customers! By our words and actions, each of us must demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunity for all individuals," Glickman said.

*(Civil Rights Plan continued on page 7)*

## USDA and Neighbors Pitch in After Flood

By Scott Hallett, WA STO

At four in the morning on February 9, Bob Hampton of Rochester, WA, looked at his family and finally said, "We better leave." By this time the water from Scatter Creek had risen so that the waiting rowboat was the only way out of the house. Only the light of morning would reveal the true extent of damage to their 300-cow dairy operation and their way of life. What the morning revealed was not pretty.

With the bridge that used to give access to the dairy now washed away and cattle isolated and standing in water that was still rising, a neighbor's



Ken Shamblin, CED, Thurston County, joins Marlene and Bob Hampton on the restored bridge across Scatter Creek. The bridge was eventually recovered far down the raging creek and replaced by volunteers "for a cup of coffee."

motorized 14-foot skiff was used to ferry about 25 of the smallest calves to safety. Three to five calves were loaded into the skiff at a time, clutched in headlocks under the arms of family and friends determined to save their lives. A "suicide trip really," Bob said later, remembering how easily the powerful water had taken out the bridge.

By later that day, the flood was full-blown and their whole operation was now inundated by several feet of water. A repairman for the milking equipment was ferried by boat to the

parlor as the water began to recede, and since the dairy facility would still be isolated, a temporary foot bridge was constructed.

February 10 was Marlene Hampton's, Bob's wife and co-operator of the dairy, birthday but she didn't feel much like celebrating. It seemed like everything needed to be washed, scraped, cleaned or mucked out. Not a happy day to begin with, but, "This turned out to be the best birthday present I ever had," Marlene now says. "Out of nowhere, people began to show up to help. 'Not just a few people,' Marlene said, 'there must have been at least 50. Some of them we knew, and others just came and worked, and we'll never even know who they were.'" Cleaning that had seemed impossible only a few hours before began to be accomplished very rapidly as strangers and friends, working side by side, cleaned stalls, limed for disease control and installed new bedding. A trailer owned by a local contractor showed up with the washed out bridge timbers rescued from downstream. Soon the bridge was reinstalled. The charge? "Aw, you owe me a cup of coffee," the contractor said.

What began as a disaster to a farm family took on an almost party atmosphere as non-farmers made progress on projects that they would never have undertaken in normal circumstances. Laughter replaced depression, and faith in humanity was elevated to a significantly higher level. A birthday cake for Marlene materialized as did food and drink for the workers, as the day became one of those rare events when people help others simply for the pleasure of helping.

Team USDA was there to help too. Ken Shamblin of the local Farm Service Agency (FSA), as well as representatives of the local conservation district and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) were

quick to provide the Hamptons with much needed support. Ken arranged for cost-sharing to restore permanent fencing, repair of some farm structures and removal of debris. The conservation district's personnel assisted in rebuilding fencing and NRCS provided technical assistance. Marlene thanks everyone involved. "They were all very cooperative," she said. "Ken came out, and explained what we needed to do. I feel people should be appreciated for what they did."

There is still a lot to do at the Hamptons. The house was ultimately a casualty of the flood, and production is not yet back to pre-flood levels, but they have also witnessed something rare -- people never see in a lifetime. People reacting at their very best.

Marlene observed, "When you see someone in need, jump in and do something. Most people don't know how to ask for help. I learned: Don't ask. Just do it!"

### FSA News

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Editorial Board: Marlyn Aycock, Greg Hawkins, Dann Stuart, Janet Baker, Jeanette Young, Star Bryant, Laura Vasquez.

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Communications Services Branch  
FSA Public Affairs Staff  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Stop 0506 (Rm 3624-S)  
Washington, DC 20250-0506

# R.I. Farmer Says Community Involvement Is the Key

By Tade Sullivan, NY STO

Everyone looks forward to the Fourth of July at Louis Escobar's place. On the surface, the annual celebration looks a lot like many of the others that take place on our country's birthday. There's barbecue, hayrides, music, and fireworks; but for Louis, it represents his philosophy about how he, as a farmer, relates to his neighbors.

The Escobar's farm first hosted the party in the early 1980's. "At the time, one of my neighbors asked if he could bring in a professional company to set fireworks off on my property," says Escobar. "This started during the economic boom, but after a couple of years, the person couldn't afford to buy the fireworks. The community still wanted it, so I decided to do it myself, and I put a can out by the road for donations," he says. "Every year, we collect more than enough to pay for everything." And each year since, like the friendships he builds within the community, the celebration has grown.

Escobar and his wife, Jane, milk 70 head of Holsteins on Rhode Island's Aquidneck Island. He took over the operation in 1972 from his father. Louis points out that in Rhode Island, there are fewer farming operations than when he was a child. "No one here is buying up land these days to farm," he says. "The highest percentage goes to development." According to the Rhode Island State FSA office, there were 90 dairy farms in 1976, while today there are 33.

Escobar has always lived on the family farm, and he is proud of what it represents. "I've been here all of my life. I haven't worked anywhere else for another day," he says. "The fact is, this is home, and this is where I want to continue farming to carry on as my father did. When farms next to us were bought up for development, I became concerned that there could be continuing pressure to put us out of business." He points out that his

father made an effort to get to know their new neighbors. "My father was a kind of diplomat. I learned from him."

The key, Louis points out, is community involvement, even if it means just a simple dialogue. "With every new neighbor, I introduce myself to explain what I am doing, and why I am doing it. I explain my farming operation in

opportunity presents itself. I prefer to spend time on the farm, but when these issues arise, you need to speak up for agriculture's interests." Louis is also the Chairman of the FSA State Committee. "I am very fortunate to be doing what I am doing. I am honored to represent Rhode Island farmers on the Committee." Escobar believes that his work with FSA is important



*"This is home, and this is where I want to continue farming to carry on as my father did," says Louis Escobar.*

some detail," Escobar says. "When I spread manure on my fields, they understand that I have taken steps to prevent runoff, and that I'm applying the fertilizer responsibly." The Escobar farm has survived, he says, because he talks with his neighbors, who may have never lived on a farm. And they listen, "They are very supportive of my operation, and are interested in what I have to say."

The Portsmouth town council regularly consults with Escobar on issues of concern. "I was appointed to an advisory committee that deals with the issue of open space. Farmers here are respected, because people recognize that we are stewards of the land," he says. "I try to be a spokesman for agriculture whenever the

because the Agency provides an essential role in helping his farming neighbors thrive. He takes particular pride in the farm lending portfolio, which has more than quadrupled in size since his chairmanship.

Escobar will tell you that involving his neighbors is one of the most important things he does on a day-to-day basis. By talking to his neighbors, to legislators, to his peers, and to the community, he has promoted positive discussions about the future of farming in his State. He says, "Pointing out that we care about the environment, and that we care about providing consumers with a cheap and abundant food supply is critical to our survival."



## Acting Administrator Bruce “Randy” Weber ...

*On April 4, 1997, Bruce (Randy) Weber was appointed Acting Administrator of the Farm Service Agency. FSA News had the opportunity to visit with Mr. Weber on a variety of issues.*

**FSA News:** This is not the first time you've been Acting Administrator. You were in this capacity at least once before. So what changes can we expect this term?

**RW:** I want to ensure employees that I am going to listen to what they have to say. Also, I want to ensure that we have open communications. That's something we have been lacking. I want to look at our organizational structure to make it more efficient and effective, especially at headquarters. We also need to revive our review of regulations, procedures and forms to streamline our processes and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. Under today's tight budget and smaller government environment, we don't have the luxury to do otherwise. I will be looking to everyone to help in this effort.

**FSA News:** Along that line, one of the big concerns, especially with county employees, is the future of the agency. You've recently made budget presentations on Capitol Hill. What seems to be the mood of the Congress, and what can we expect personnel-wise in the coming months and years?

**RW:** The Congress and the Clinton Administration are committed to balancing the budget. This is a goal we all believe is paramount. This effort, along with the changes made in the 1996 Farm Bill, will necessitate that the Agency downsize even further. That's a process we've been going through since 1994, and unfortunately, it is going to continue. The President's Fiscal Year 1998 (FY 98) budget calls for a reduction of 269 federal employees and 1,850 County Office Committee (COC) employees. It also calls for further downward adjustments in COC staff levels of 1,000 in FY 99; 2,000 in FY 2000; and 1,000 in each of FY 2001 and 2002. That's a 67 percent reduction, or 44 percent of all of USDA's staff reduc-

tions since FY 93. Unfortunately, these staff reductions don't adequately reflect our workload realities. However, the FY 98 cuts are a given, and I am hopeful that the current appropriation process in Congress will not make these cuts any greater. Indications are that budget numbers being considered by the Appropriations Committee are lower than the President's budget by as much as \$1 billion. At this point, it is not clear how this might eventually affect USDA's and our budget. In any event, it's doubtful that the cuts will be smaller. Recent events are encouraging to me that staffing adjustments beyond FY 98 will be workload driven, and not exclusively budget driven. This would be a welcome development. I will inform everyone as soon as something more concrete is known.

**FSA News:** One of the rumors along the lines of our future and our size, is that FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are going to be merged into one agency. Do you see that happening?

**RW:** Despite recent rhetoric, this is an issue that we ought not to be real concerned about. The Secretary has directed that we look at the issue of how USDA's field delivery system could be further streamlined and improved. FSA has its strengths, and NRCS has its strengths, and I think we need to rely on both of our staffs to provide quality service to our customers. I feel reasonably comfortable that FSA's going to be around for a long time.

**FSA News:** When we talk about the field delivery system, the Secretary's been quoted as saying that he would like to transfer the county office employees to a federal status. Is there any movement in that direction that you're aware of?

**RW:** One of the recommendations endorsed by the Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) is the conversion of the non-federal staff to a federal status. I think that makes a lot of sense. I think it would be helpful to have all of FSA operating under

one system. I think it provides benefits and strengthens our organization. I understand that there are going to be differences of opinion in the Agency about this matter. But I would hope that this change will be viewed as an opportunity. This is not an action to diminish the importance of the COC system. Having spent my entire 37-year career in the COC system, I strongly support it as does the Secretary. I can assure our county staff that I'm fully committed to making certain that the conversion is done in a way such that everyone is treated fairly and equitably.

**FSA News:** Recently we completed the CRP sign-up -- sign-up 15. About 25.5 million acres were offered. Was that in line with expectations?

**RW:** It exceeded our expectations. Once again our people exhibited that "can-do" spirit and Team USDA effort to accomplish a task many doubted could be done in the short time allotted. The FSA family, NRCS, and our other sister agencies pulled together, and were able to accomplish this historic sign-up well beyond the expectations of most everyone. I had no doubt you would get the job done.

For example in Cascade County, Montana, FSA and NRCS held joint producer meetings with groups of 8 to 10 current CRP participants where staff from both agencies explained the new CRP regulations, and questions were answered. They also signed up producers right on the spot. Similar cooperation was seen in Harrison County, Missouri, where FSA and NRCS worked together so producers had to make only one trip to the office to complete their offer.

I've talked to the Secretary and others, and they are very proud of the work that was done. I want to extend a heart-felt thanks to all of our employees. The Secretary also very much appreciates the work that was done on the CRP sign-up and we know that kind of dedication will continue.

**FSA News:** Speaking of the Secretary, he said that this sign-up process would go a long way to demonstrate to

## ...Expect Communication and Organization in FSA

Congress the strong attributes of our Agency and the ability to get the job done. We did fairly well in that regard?

**RW:** I believe we did. The Secretary, again, has indicated his great satisfaction as to how the process went. Again, our employees are to be congratulated for a job well done.

**FSA News:** What other major changes can we expect in program delivery of the services that the FSA delivers?

**RW:** Certainly the 1996 Farm Bill changed the way we do business. The production adjustment aspect of our workload is generally less than what it was in the past. However, since we signed nearly 80 percent more farms into AMTA (the Agricultural Marketing Transition Act), the overall workload reductions in this area were moderated. However, despite what others

network we have. We are one of the few agencies within the Department that has a field network staffed at the grassroots level. And there are such things as the ag census and other programs that USDA is involved in that the Agency can help with. Finally, there are those who believe the 1996 Farm Bill essentially eliminated our workload. As you know, this is not what happened and I am committed to ensuring that our detractors understand the facts. We still have plenty of work to do out there.

**FSA News:** You were a member of the Civil Rights Actions Team, or the CRAT as they call it for short. What were your overall impressions of what you heard, both good and bad?

**RW:** Well, I attended 10 of the 12 listening sessions that were held throughout the country. What I heard

and dealing with these situations must be our highest priority. I also want to assure everyone else that your good work is greatly appreciated and valued.

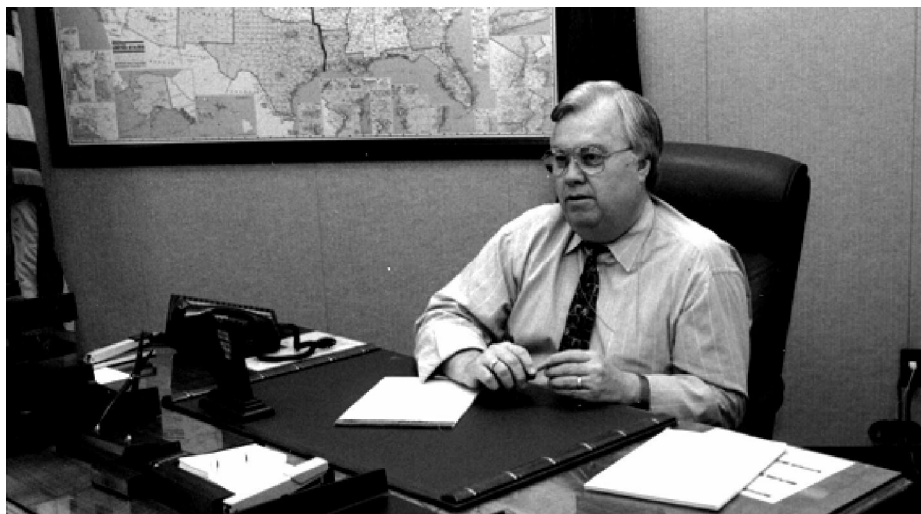
What the members of the CRAT heard in our listening sessions would lead one to believe the problems of discrimination and disparate treatment of customers in the FSA field delivery structure is systemic. I for one do not believe that. It is unfortunate and unacceptable that discrimination exists in the Agency. I urge everyone to help me correct this situation. I believe a very good aspect of the CRAT Report is the recommendations that deal with outreach and communications. These are areas that I am committed to improving. Your suggestions are welcome.

**FSA News:** Do you look at that report as an indictment of everyone in the agency?

**RW:** No, I don't look at it as an indictment. However, I believe, more appropriately, it should be viewed as a wake-up call. We have problems and they must be addressed. I strongly believe the vast majority of our employees do an excellent job, treat farmers fairly, and treat employees fairly. We do have those within our organization that do discriminate and treat people disparately; and this simply cannot continue to be tolerated. Where we have problems, we need to remedy them and take appropriate disciplinary actions, including removal if necessary.

**FSA News:** Is there anything else that you'd like to tell employees?

**RW:** Again, I want to express how much I appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you in the future. Our image has been tarnished, and I look forward to reestablishing the Agency's integrity. I've been with the agency for 37 years, and I know your capabilities, commitment and devotion. It's unmatched anywhere else in USDA. Keep up the good work.



might think, our workload in many other areas, such as farm loans, remains steady. Workload under NAP will be variable depending on weather variances and our work on conservation matters will be reduced somewhat after FY 97 but EQIP and CRP will require steady workload for the next several years.

I also think the Agency will take on a different thrust as we move into the future. There are many things within USDA that we, as an agency, could work on simply because of the

was alarming. Obviously some of our customers and employees have not been treated fairly and equitably, and discrimination has occurred. These situations can no longer be tolerated and must be dealt with. Where discrimination is occurring, those doing so must be disciplined. We cannot allow this to continue. We must all be held accountable for our actions. I realize those discriminating and treating customers and employees disparately are limited. Whatever the number, they are unacceptable

## **Advance Your Career with the Graduate School**

### **USDA's Graduate School -- Learn Anywhere, Any Time!**

USDA's Graduate School offers programs that reach students wherever they are, whether at a Forest Service outpost in Alaska, on an aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean, at home or at work. The Graduate School is a non-degree-granting institution that offers continuing education programs open to all adults, 18 years or older. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the school, a leader in adult continuing education since 1921.

The Graduate School's Correspondence Program "provides alternatives so educational needs are met," said Program Director Norma Hardwood. "Most correspondence students are interested in advancing their careers or changing to a new one."

The methods of instruction range from the traditional to the modern. While most courses provide lessons through texts, one course is taught entirely

through the Internet. All courses incorporate computers, from which students can use e-mail to receive and submit lessons.

Graduate School correspondence courses receive credit recommendations from the American Council on Education's Program on Non-Collegiate Sponsored Instruction, which facilitates the transfer of credits to degree-granting institutions. The program offers certificates of accomplishment in many subjects, such as accounting, engineering, meteorology, and paralegal studies. For details, call (202) 720-7123.

The Graduate School's National Independent Study Center also offers self-study curricula in subjects such as personnel, statistics, and speed reading. Staff instructors are available to answer technical questions. In some courses, workbooks are supple-

mented by video and audio cassettes, or have a computer component.

"The orientation is practical, not academic," said Program Manager Jeanne Miller. "We translate complex regulations into easy-to-read language. Students tell us that they keep course materials as a desk reference." For details, call (303) 969-5800.

The Graduate School's newly created Distance Learning Institute is helping organizations deliver customized, cost-effective video, computer and multimedia-based programs to satisfy training needs. The institute's technology-assisted instruction and consulting services include a regular schedule of live satellite, interactive training programs; video production/consulting; multimedia and computer training/instruction; and compressed video conferencing. For more information, call (214) 767-8206.

### **Leadership Program Announced for GS-7/11 Employees**

A new six-month leadership development program for Federal employees at levels GS-7 through GS-11 has been created by the USDA Graduate School. The New Leader Program (NLP) is designed for Federal employees who have just entered leadership positions or who have a high potential for leadership in positions including: first-line supervisors, team leaders, project leaders, administrative support, and members of self-directed work teams. Program I began on January 26. Participants enrolled in Program I were: Terri Esformes, FSA; Melinda May, RMA; and Jason Lipsey, FAS. Program II is scheduled to begin May 4. Applications for the 1998 programs will be accepted in early August.

The New Leader Program is designed around a model of effective leadership

competencies, the Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF). The program provides a solid training and development foundation of team leadership skills, enhanced by appropriate agency developmental experiences. The program focuses on the following LEF basic elements: leadership, problem solving, self-direction, flexibility, interpersonal skills, decisiveness, written communication, oral communication, and technical competence. Participants complete the Leadership Effectiveness Inventory to gain feedback on the essential behaviors of a successful leader. The results help participants design individual development plans that are linked to organizational and individual needs.

Each participant develops an individual program with developmental

assignments and independent study activities within their agency. These plans include: a 30-day developmental work assignment away from the position of record; shadowing, observing, and interviewing a self-directed work team; a program-related literature review; and a review of the agency or organization mission statements, goals and structure.

These activities are designed to give participants insight into agency mission, culture and organizational structure, to reinforce the formal classroom training, and to meet agency and individual development needs for the future. Since its inception in January, 1995, participants representing 28 Federal agencies from all areas of the country have enrolled in the New Leader Program.



## FSA Programs Also Move You Ahead

### CEP Graduate Meets Career Goal

For many years FSA has provided opportunities for employees who have the potential to take on increased job responsibilities. One of the most recently developed programs to enhance this effort is the Career Enhancement Program (CEP). The program provides career opportunities for employees who have the potential for assuming more responsible assignments, obtain a more effective use of the existing workforce, motivate employees, and enhance their productivity.

Since Fiscal Year 1996 ten employees have been selected to participate in the program. According to Cheryl Fuller, Employee Development Specialist, Training and Development Branch, Human Resources Division, CEP provides a wonderful opportunity for purposeful training and experience planning for individuals to better manage their careers and to meet organizational needs.

The most current graduate, Brenda Haddox, Financial Specialist, Financial Management Division gives her own testimony: "Before I was chosen for the Career Enhancement Program, I had been employed with USDA for over 14 years as a Secretary in ASCS in various divisions and in the Rural Electrification Administration. I had been a Secretary for so long that I no longer found it challenging. I found

myself in a dead-end position and needed something different."

Haddox says that she had always been interested in the financing and accounting field and had even taken various accounting and auditing courses through the USDA Graduate School. "I was always hopeful that one day I would be able to use my accounting skills as a stepping stone toward career advancement, CEP gave me that chance."

In her new career field, Haddox finds a greater variety of duties, with increased job responsibilities. "I am fortunate to have been chosen for the CEP because it gave me an opportunity that I would not have had otherwise," said Haddox. "I really appreciate the belief and trust that my supervisors have put in my abilities to handle new and more complex jobs. It has been a rewarding experience, and I am really enjoying it!"



*Brenda Haddox, Jim Little, Director, FMD, center, and Sylvester Osineme, right, Chief, Financing and Disbursing Staff, analyze CCC's daily financing.*

*(Civil Rights Plan continued from page 1)*

"Every customer and every employee must be treated fairly and equitably and with dignity and respect," said the Secretary. "There are no exceptions. There are no excuses. This is a 'one-size-fits-all' policy -- for all our customers and all our employees -- regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and

marital or family status. Only by working together and by living up to the letter and the spirit of this policy can USDA be called the "People's Department."

Randy Weber, Associate Administrator, FSA, and member of the Civil Rights Action Team, was pleased and enthusiastic about the Secretary's remarks and recommendations. "We will join in wholeheartedly to do what it

takes to eliminate the barriers that prevent fair and equal treatment for employees as well as program beneficiaries," said Weber. "As a team, we can and must work together to eliminate discrimination practices in any form."

## ***In Recognition of Women's History Month-March 1997***

### ***Historical Perspective on Women in American Agriculture***

Women have been a part of American agriculture since before the first white settlements in the seventeenth century. Native-American women often were the primary cultivators of crops, and as a result controlled distribution of agricultural products within their communities and experimented with crop production to improve varieties and yields.

In the American colonies and early days of the Republic, women performed tasks essential to the success of family farms. Aside from maintaining the household--cooking, cleaning, spinning, weaving, sewing, child-rearing, and nursing--women traditionally cared for gardens (a critical source of food for the family), poultry (for eggs and meat), and dairy animals. When field work required extra hands, women might also join husbands and sons in planting, cultivating and harvesting.

In the early decades of the 20th century and increasing in pace after the end of World War II, the farm woman's role changed significantly with the advance of new technologies in the fields, and the home, and in society at large. In place of home production, women might assist the farm operation with off-farm jobs to provide secure income and benefits, or by taking on farm business and labor responsibilities.

Not all women in agriculture have been farm wives. Small numbers of women have always operated farms

on their own. These women chose to farm on their own for both economic and personal reasons. Between 1950 and 1980, the number of female U.S. farmers and farm managers rose from 3 to 10 percent of the total--71,000 to 127,000.

Women have also played a visible role in agricultural organizations since the 19th century. Beginning in the 1870's, women joined such groups as the Patrons of Husbandry, also known as the Grange, and the more politically oriented Farmers Alliance and Populist movement. Women have been active since the early 20th century in

Over the centuries, many individual women have distinguished themselves in the field of American agriculture. Eliza Lucas Pinckney of South Carolina has been credited with the introduction of indigo culture to that colony, in 1739, while she was managing her father's plantation. In 1873, another Eliza, Eliza Tibbetts, promoted the commercial adoption of navel oranges on the west coast by experimenting with a new variety from Brazil, provided to her by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A third woman, Elizabeth White, again in cooperation with the USDA, began experimenting with growing blueberries on the cranberry bogs of New Jersey in 1911, leading to the successful development of blueberries as a commercial crop.

For many women on the farm--sole operators, joint operators, or wives of male operators--the perennial cultural questions of women's work versus men's work, house versus barn, run counter to experience. As we attempt to better characterize women's place in the farm enterprise, we work toward a fuller understanding of that experience and lay the groundwork for legal

structures, government programs, and cultural ideas that can accommodate the reality of "Women and Farming--Changing Structures, Changing Roles." (Excerpts from Agricultural and Rural History Section, Economic Research Service)



1997 National Women's History Month Commemorative Poster. Eight women selected for the leadership they demonstrated in communities throughout the nation.

the American Farm Bureau Federation and since the mid-20th century in women's auxiliaries of the commodity organizations. More recently, in response to farm crises in the 1970's and 1980's, farm women have created their own organizations to speak out on farm issues, forming such groups as Concerned Farm Wives, Women Involved in Farm Economics, and American Agri-Women.